

Wind Advisory Flag Program

What is the Wind Advisory Flag Program?

It is a nautical flag program implemented by the Tobacco Asthma Coalition with the support of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) that will provide a visual reminder to the public of prospective high wind days. Six sets of flags will be placed in strategic locations at participating schools and community organizations.

Why was the Wind Advisory Flag Program developed?

When wind blows, particulate matter such as dirt, soil dust, pollens, molds, ashes, soot, and aerosols can become airborne and remain suspended in the air. Very small, fine particulate matter easily gets inhaled deep into the lungs, aggravating respiratory problems such as asthma. Those at highest risk are the elderly, people with lung and heart disease, and children. However, particle pollution can cause coughing, wheezing, and decreased lung function even in otherwise healthy children and adults. By providing an advisory about prospective outdoor wind conditions, families and individuals, especially those with pulmonary issues, can then modify their behavior and reduce their exposure to help minimize or prevent negative health effects.

How will the public be notified of the wind forecast?

The program uses different colored flags to indicate health risk levels according to wind velocity. As ADEQ provides the three-day wind forecast, the appropriate flag will be raised in notification to the public.

What are the flag colors and what do they mean?

The flag colors are **Green**, **Yellow**, and **Red**.

A **Green** flag would indicate little or no wind, so health risk levels are low.

A **Yellow** flag would indicate more wind activity, a moderate risk level.

A **Red** flag would indicate strong wind activity, a high risk level.

FACT SHEET



Reduce your exposure to particulate matter....

When wind velocity is high outdoors, particulate matter levels will likely be high also. Staying indoors can usually reduce exposure to some particles.

In the home, car and workplace:

- Keep windows and doors closed.
- When air quality improves, open up and air out your home.
- Reduce indoor sources of particles. Activities such as burning candles and tobacco smoking greatly increase particle levels in a home.
- Wipe floors and hard surfaces with a damp mop or cloth that will retain the dust.

For people with heart or lung disease, asthma, and allergies:

- When wind velocity is high, limit or avoid time outdoors.
- Have adequate medication on hand.
- Be sure to follow your asthma management plan.

Did you know...?

- Particulate matter (also called particle pollution) is the term for a mixture of solid and liquid droplets found in the air.
- The smallest, or “fine”, particles are easily inhaled deep into the lungs where they may accumulate, react, be cleared or absorbed.
- The average adult breathes 3,400 gallons of air per day.
- Children breathe about 50 percent more air per pound than adults.
- Children and infants are among the most susceptible to many air pollutants.
- Particle pollution has been linked to the exacerbation of pulmonary diseases such as asthma.
- Asthma is the most common cause of chronic disease in the pediatric population and is the most common cause of missed school days, emergency department visits and hospitalizations in the U.S.
- In Yuma County approximately 2,800 children receive health care for asthma in any given year.

Participating Organizations:

Yuma County Public Health Services District

2200 W. 28th Street, Yuma, Arizona, 85364

Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.

214 W. Main Street, Somerton, Arizona 85350

Gadsden School District

1453 N. Main Street, San Luis, Arizona 85349

For more information, or if your organization would like to join our Flag Program contact:

Yuma Tobacco Asthma Coalition

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To check the Wind Advisory Three-Day Forecast for Yuma County go to the ADEQ website:

www.azdeq.gov and click on **Yuma Wind Forecast**

YTAC Members:

Yuma County Public Health Services District-Tobacco Use Prevention Program

Regional Center for Border Health, Inc. Arizona Department of Environmental Quality-Office of Children's Environmental Health

First Things First Alice Byrne School Somerton Middle School Yuma Regional Medical Center